

Action!

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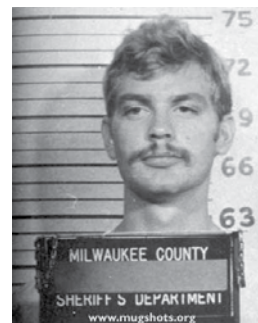


Teaching the Word.
Reaching the World!

Can God Save This

Serial Killer?

New Book Retells Dahmer's Story with WBS



Jeffrey Dahmer

By Mickie Kennedy

Jeffrey Dahmer, born May 21, 1960, was perhaps America's most infamous serial killer. Dahmer confessed to the murders of 17 young men and boys between 1978 and 1991. Police arrested him in 1991 and found victims' decaying body parts in his Milwaukee apartment. He was accused of necrophilia and cannibalism.

Does God's forgiving grace extend even to heinous monsters like Jeffrey Dahmer? There are many who say "No." Two who said "Yes!" were Curtis Booth and Mary Mott. Each heard his interview on Dateline NBC. Each knew if ever a person needed God in his life, it was Dahmer.

Mary said, "That young man doesn't know anything except evil."

Quite independently, each mailed World Bible School courses to Dahmer in prison.

Mary wrote him, "I don't know if you want to do this, but I believe it would help you if you studied the Bible."

While in prison, Dahmer received reams of unsolicited religious materials which he normally discarded. But WBS piqued his interest because of its connection to churches of Christ, where his father had taken him sporadically in his earliest years.

Later in life, after heavy drinking caused Dahmer's discharge from the military, he lived with his grandmother who was a lifetime member of the church. Her faith intrigued him, but he failed to take that opportunity. Instead, he descended into the deepest kind of darkness. Justifying his violence on the basis of evolution, he claimed that no one could hold him accountable since humanity was a chance product of slime.

Following his arrest, Jeffrey's tortured mind turned again toward God. After he com-

pleted the WBS courses, he acknowledged his sinfulness and his need for God's forgiveness.

He wrote to Mary, "Thank you so much for sending me the WBS correspondence course! Also, thank you for the Bible! I want to accept the Lord's salvation..."

To Curtis he wrote, "Thank you very much continued on page 2

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Meeting
Jesus
in Jail
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Meeting Jesus in Jail

By Vara Gray

In 1985 Richard Mendenhall started the jail ministry in Georgetown by visiting Williamson County Jail and telling the inmates about Jesus. It was one of the early prison ministries in this region. In 1987, Melvin Strietelmeier joined him. They began offering World Bible School courses when several inmates wanted to continue studies after they were transferred.



Melvin Strietelmeier

Melvin Strietelmeier is 86 years of age, and has been taking Jesus' message to this jail for 20 years. To be 86 years of age and to have touched as many souls through his presence at the jail and by teaching

WBS is a remarkable accomplishment.

A local newspaper reported, "The Bible study courses are popular at the jail." Figures for enrollment are 295 in 2003; 484 in 2004; 334 in 2005; 265 in 2006; with an average of about 50 baptisms each year, and 29 baptized

as of September this year. Strietelmeier said, "So many of them come from broken homes. They have been put down all their lives. I show them the Bible and tell them, 'Hey, you can lift yourself up.' The impact has been very good on some—some will never change. If we can get, say, 10% of them to be an asset to society, we have accomplished a great deal."



Co-worker Ray Fullerton said, "Jail ministry is a mission field all to itself, because so many religious groups don't go there. It is grubby work, very tiring. They're at the bottom of the barrel, looking for a way to get out. They are looking for something and they will listen to you."

Here are some quotes from inmates or former inmates:

Jeff Myers: "I want to thank you all for the effort you invest in these courses. My time

here has been heavily invested in deepening my relationship with Jesus. The WBS courses have enabled me to dig for gold in God's word like I never did outside these walls. For the last eight months I have been leading the church for my pod here in jail. The WBS courses you send and grade are wonderful tools for spiritual growth."

Scott Volz: "Five years ago, I was at the lowest point in my life. I had just committed a horrible crime and, deservedly so, was put in jail. I thought life for me had just ended. But, in fact, it just began [for] Melvin Strietelmeier dropped off a Bible study and spoke with me about Jesus.... I was blessed to find a church of Christ in Arlington while out on bond. There I was baptized. I have ten years of probation ahead of me. With Jesus as my guide, all will be well. Tough... but well. The love and kindness you show by sharing the Gospel matters so very much."

Robert Smith: "When I was first locked up, I was one of the angriest people around.

continued on page 6

Serial Killer from page 1

for sending me the WBS Introductory Lesson and Bible; that was very kind of you! I mailed the completed lesson to Mrs. Stafford. ... But I still have one problem. This prison does not have a baptismal tank and Mr. Burkum, the prison chaplain, is not sure he can find someone to bring a tank in and baptize me. This has me very concerned! Would you be willing to help find someone to baptize me? I've taken all of the other steps; now I need and want to be baptized."

He turned to God because there was no one else to turn to....

This request was passed to Roy Ratcliff at a church of Christ in Wisconsin. Roy knew of the case and did not hesitate to help. Roy met Jeffrey on May 10, 1994. He became convinced that Jeffrey truly believed in Jesus as the Son of God.

Jeffrey told him, "If anyone needed to have his sins washed away, it's me! In fact, I'm looking forward to it and counting on it."

Roy took Jeffrey's confession of faith. Then two guards and Chaplain Burkum escorted them to the whirlpool tub in the prison infirmary. Along the way, inmates called out to Jeffrey, and he responded that he was on the way to be baptized. An inmate set the mood with a Gospel tune. The tub was small and Jeffrey assumed a fetal position to be completely in the water. When Jeff's head broke the surface, Roy welcomed him to the Family of God. Jeff smiled and simply said, "Thank you."

Roy asked for permission to continue visits to the prison. Jeffrey was surprised that someone would want to see him regularly. The two became friends through their Wednesday Bible studies. Additionally, Jeffrey's father was restored, and his younger brother converted.

On November 28, 1994, Jeffrey was murdered in prison by a fellow inmate.

When Roy Ratcliff conducted the funeral service on December 2, 1994, he said:

"Jeff confessed to me his great remorse for his crimes. He wished he could do something for the families of his victims to make it right, but there was nothing he could do. He turned to God because there was no one else to turn to, but he showed great courage in his daring to ask the question, 'Is heaven for me too?' I think many people are resentful of him for asking that question. But he dared to ask, and he dared to believe the answer."

The full story of Jeffrey Dahmer's conversion, as told by Roy Ratcliff with Lindy Adams, recently came out in book form. Published in 2006 by Leafwood Publishers, it is entitled, *Dark Journey, Deep Grace: The Story Behind A Serial Killer's Journey to Faith.*



Mickie Kennedy



Gina's Story

By Gina

My name is Gina and I am the daughter of an unmarried alcoholic. I grew up around bars, men, alcohol and drugs. I remember praying at an early age, "God, if you are real, come and get me!" At the age of about eight I was raped; at the age of nine I tried to overdose. By the age of 14, I had my first child. We moved constantly, without structure, without stability. The constants in my life were the cursing, partying, drugs, alcohol, lying and men. This was my life.



I saw love, kindness and faith in my grandmother. She taught me to pray, and this knowledge stayed with me through all the darkness of sin in my life. As a young mother of three children, I was abused and lost. I didn't know how to have a better life. The more I tried to

do right, the more I did wrong and the deeper I sank into the darkness of sin. For six years I lived a life of drugs, alcohol, sex, lying, stealing—doing whatever I could to feed my addiction. Through the haze of drugs and alcohol, the pain of life appeared easier. I was in Satan's grasp. I had become the person I wanted to escape from all those years before.

A Life Transformed

As a result of my lifestyle, I was in trouble with the police repeatedly. In a crack motel in 2005, I found myself on my knees praying for God to save me, to have me arrested so that I could get help and change my life. The memory of my grandmother's faith and trust in God was there like a light showing me where to turn. Three days later I was arrested and put in jail. I was able to attend church services at the jail, and, shortly after my arrival, I was invited by another inmate to study through World Bible School and Sycamore church of Christ. I couldn't get my lessons fast enough, couldn't study long enough to satisfy my thirst for God's word. One day I woke up and I felt free. I was still in jail but

my heart felt free. It was awesome. I began to understand what I was reading. My life was changing. Gary came and baptized me on October 26, 2005. Dale and Larry, also from Sycamore, were my World Bible School teachers during my 18 months of incarceration.

Today I am a new creature, reborn to walk a new life as a Christian. I have been out of prison for five months and have been working with World Bible School at the Sycamore church. I have a new job and a place of my own to live.

Most of all, I have peace in my spirit that comes from a daily walk with Christ. Giving your life totally to Christ isn't always easy.

I've been out of prison for five months, and now I'm a WBS teacher!

It can be a slow process but the reward is immeasurable. For me, becoming a Christian has been a life changing

experience; a new life began for me. I left a life of sin and darkness. The peace that I so desperately wanted as a child is now mine through Christ. Put on the armor of God and walk through life as a Christian. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed (Romans 12:2).



Above & Beyond by Kevin Rhodes

Breaking down the walls.

Truly, prison walls are a dreary, stark reality. But as we've seen in these pages of *Action!*, they cannot deny the Good News of Jesus Christ! God uses WBS in mighty ways by breaking down prison walls, giving freedom, and making an impact on individual lives.

Making an impact. Each year, hundreds of churches of Christ do just that on WBS' *Impact Sunday*. They are setting aside their own special Sunday to: 1) emphasize sharing Jesus; 2) show the WBS DVD; and 3) have a special contribution that will make an impact through WBS.

Our heartfelt thanks goes to the many churches who have partnered with us in this way. We are making good progress towards our goal of \$450,000. *But we're not there yet.* Has your church had its *Impact Sunday*? Please help us before the end of the year. Let's make an impact *together* by sharing the freedom that comes from Jesus Christ.



Action!

EDITOR John Reese

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FREEDOM FILES

Prison Outbreak... In Reverse!

by Ruth Orr

In 2006 we were set to go into the Anambra State prison where we had 64 prisoners who had studied World Bible School lessons and were ready for baptism. We had long awaited this day.



**Felix and Ruth
outside the prison**

About then, there was an upheaval in Magdugari, Northern Nigeria. It seems that a school teacher had told a girl to put her Koran up. When she refused, the teacher took the book from her saying she could have it back after school. The teacher gave the book back to her, but that night rioting broke out. Muslims killed hundreds of ethnic Igbos, destroying their shops, burning to death women and children, and torturing the men.


American newscasts reported this as Muslims killing Christians. My elders were concerned and asked me to come home. I begged to stay saying I was in no danger, so they agreed for me to stay for a few more days. Two days later the riots came to Anambra State and the prison in Onitsha where I was working. My Nigerian co-worker Felix called me: "Ruth, something terrible has happened. Now the Igbos are fighting back and killing the Muslims." The Igbos were bringing their dead back to Onitsha to bury them, and taking vengeance on Muslims there. Felix told me to stay at the motel. I was guarded night and day but was never in danger. Our work never stopped as our WBS students came to the motel and were taught and baptized there.

Mobs went to the prison and broke the doors down. They burned the offices and all paper work. In fact, they burned everything except the new benches for worship given by Church Street, Lewisburg, Tenn. Rioters forced every prisoner out of that prison. Many refused to go,

but they were beaten and made to leave. Our students were out and scared, and Felix was devastated.

The Lord is always in control. Felix had taught them well and been a true friend. Within two days, some of the prisoners were calling to ask Felix, "What do we do?" Within a few weeks, 30 of the inmates who were WBS students walked back to the prison voluntarily to continue serving their terms. To God's glory, most of them have been freed and only two of those already baptized are still serving their terms. Later, two more WBS students also walked back to the prison.

One of the returning inmates said, "Before I got myself into prison, I had prayed to God to show me the true church in the midst of confusion. Maybe God made it possible for me to get into the prison that I might find the true church — the church of Christ. I still need baptism so I can be right with God."

Felix and the governor of Anambra State have worked to get the WBS work in prison back to normal, with more access to inmates. The prison now has 245 inmates, of whom 89 are students. We thank God for helping this great work to continue. 

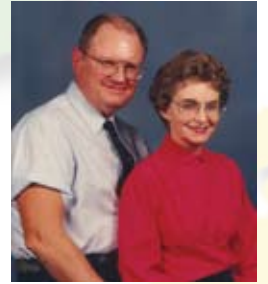
Travis' Story: Blessing the Local Church

by Bob Penick

Thirty-four year old Travis, grandson of a Baptist preacher, was not a run-of-the-mill prisoner when he was sent to jail for embezzling. Good looking, intelligent, successful, affluent and charming, he seemed out of place in a county jail in Indiana.

In May of 2005, he decided to study the Bible by correspondence. He completed our World Bible School course, and we have been corresponding ever since. When he told me that he wanted to be baptized, I called the sheriff there and inquired about how we could arrange it. No one had ever been baptized there before, and details were hard to work out from my place in Oklahoma.

I called and wrote to the local church. Their preacher, Wayne, was out of town, and their mailbox was hidden in some bushes, so no one saw my letter. I considered driving up there myself when the preacher contacted me. I was excited and relieved. Wayne worked it out with the sheriff and Travis was baptized.




**Bob and Barbara
Penick**

Having provided WBS lessons to hundreds of people all over the world — including many in prisons — I've learned that many, sometimes most, will not choose to follow our Lord. But it is so rewarding when someone's life is set on track for heaven, and you know you've helped.

It doesn't get much better than Travis. He started teaching everyone around him, and the church developed the jail ministry. When Travis was transferred to a halfway facility, the church just took him in and he seems to have revitalized that church. They changed their Sunday service times so that he could be there, and since his parole last year, he has become a vital part of the body.

The preacher is also an attorney. Travis now works for him and is doing well. He jokes that with his conviction for embezzling, he will never again be pulling down the big bucks, but he is content and busy helping Wayne with his business. He now has a car and works in his spare time fixing up an old house he is buying.

Now listen to this. Travis converted a fellow prisoner who wanted Travis to baptize him. The church gathered to witness Travis baptize him. He helped the new Christian teach his girlfriend, and they were married when he got out of jail. Shortly after that, the man died with assurance of heaven as his true home!

Louise, a sweet older lady in church there, writes and calls me occasionally, always excitedly telling me about Travis and the upswing in Christian fervor there. 





Ex-convict Disturbs Gathering

by Chester Woodhall

It was an evening Gospel Meeting held in a big tent in a crowded South African shanty town. As I stood to preach, a man pushed his way forward. He told the packed audience that I was the person who had led him and many others to Christ while in prison. He had become a Christian and lived the Christian life ever since. He certainly got the audience's attention for the Gospel preaching that night!

Prison ministry in Buffalo City has been exciting for my wife Angela and myself as we have endeavored over the past ten years to bring some of society's worst sinners to repentance. We rejoice that several hundred prisoners have been baptized while in prison. Murderers, bank robbers and fraudsters are amongst those we have seen come to Christ.

We make use of World Bible School and NewLife Behavior materials with prisoners throughout the prisons of the Eastern Cape. At present about 700 Eastern Cape prisoners are taking World Bible School courses, and the grading is done by the very effective WBS team at Clyde, Tex. The NewLife Behavior materials are particularly suitable for our small group Bible studies because they are written for prison ministry.



NewLife Courses for Prisons and Beyond

By Buck Griffith and H.M. Motsinger

In August 1984 Dr. H. M. Motsinger, an educator and counselor, accepted the call to write a curriculum to assist prison inmates to change their attitudes and actions. The curriculum's success led to the formation of the NewLife Behavior Ministry. In 1993 a curriculum called *FamilyNet* was added to help inmates' wives and children. In 1994 the Texas Department of Criminal Justice endorsed its placement in all Texas prisons, and certified training was offered. In 1997 NLB won

the Governor George Bush Award as the Best State Jail program in Texas.

In 2002 Buck Griffith was named president of NLB, and Dr. Motsinger gave his time to its international expansion. Since then, workers in over 40 countries have requested copies of the free CD with the NLB curriculum. Formal programs are underway in Russia, Zambia, Nigeria, South Africa, Ukraine, Philippines and Mexico, often using World Bible School lessons as companion materials. In these countries the curriculum may be used in the prisons, universities, high schools, prisons, orphanages and churches. Spanish, Russian and Chinese versions are also available.

In the United States NLB is used primarily in congregations, prisons and with family members of prisoners. In fact, the curriculum is being used in over 43 states, either by correspondence or with in-prison classes.

Twenty-six Regional Directors serve throughout Texas, Alabama, New Jersey, Oklahoma, Kansas, Alaska, Florida, Indiana, Kentucky and West Virginia. States such as Oklahoma and Alabama have organized statewide to increase their impact throughout the penal systems.



NLB training is offered at annual National NLB Conferences, the most recent of which was held October 12-13, 2007, at Prestoncrest church of Christ in Dallas. The 35th National Prison Ministry Workshop is scheduled for June 11-13, 2008, at the Wyoming Avenue church of Christ in Detroit, Michigan. At such meetings the latest "National Directory" is released to improve follow-up networking for new Christians and others being released. This Directory can also be obtained at any time from NLBM.

The growth of churches and individuals involved is staggering, as shown by the annual numbers reported in the Directory:

- 1978:** 24 churches of Christ and 110 Individual Christians Involved
- 1980:** 50 churches and 205 Individuals
- 1986:** 280 churches and 375 Individuals
- 1993:** 481 churches and 698 Individuals
- 2007:** 842 churches and 1,765 Individuals

Buck Griffith estimates conservatively that 10,000 prisoners are baptized annually in U.S. prisons by churches of Christ and volunteers.

Through an agreement between NLBM and World Bible School, WBS teachers may use the NLB curriculum without purchasing the normal license. They can print out the courses from a CD obtainable at a nominal charge from NLBM's central office in Corpus Christi, 3833 S. Staples, Suite S-101, Corpus Christi, Texas 78411; phone 361-855-3372.



Convenient Conversion?

Is repentance in prison meant for God or for the parole board? How can bad people develop good motives? Is theirs a true transformation, or is it what skeptics call "a jailhouse conversion"?

How convenient for the critics themselves, to pontificate from soft armchairs at a safe distance. They seldom see the struggles of believers attempting to practice Christianity behind prison bars. It is difficult to persist in prayers and studies under the constant glare of lights, guards and inmates. The latter pour their scorn and threats on anyone who dares to break ranks. Good is often repaid with evil. Toughest of all are the personal, internal struggles against ingrained habits and addictions, entrenched patterns of failure and soul-destroying guilt. It requires real courage to take on these challenges.

David Mendiola was very young when his father drowned, and his mother started drinking heavily. He was completely disillusioned, not caring for anyone or anything — not even himself. Eventually his addictions led him to prison for stealing. He was sentenced to 20 years. Having nothing to live for, he joined a group known as the Mexican Mafia, thinking he might gain respect as a "cool" insider. Instead, they changed his



continued on page 6



Starting a Jail Ministry

By Vara Gray

1. Locate a successfully-operating jail ministry and express a desire to learn all you can from them. Let them guide you through the starting process.
2. Volunteers who wish to visit facilities will need to make appropriate applications to obtain official clearance. This procedure can take up to six weeks.
3. Determine with your elders how much money will be available and adjust your expectations accordingly. Be prepared for prisoners to add many referrals.
4. Begin by offering simple lessons — many inmates are not educated. Attract attention with tracts or *Power for Today*; then offer Bible lessons and WBS correspondence. They love “free stuff.”
5. Very important — be consistent in your visits and WBS correspondence. Many are won over simply by your regularity and your respect for them.
6. Maintain a good relationship with correctional officers. Observe all prison rules, such as not carrying personal possessions into the facility.
7. Offer Bibles as an incentive for taking the lessons.
8. Be a good listener — be open-minded, not judgmental.
9. Never ask questions of inmates. Do not get involved in their personal lives. Do not pass notes or letters or make phone calls or make contacts for inmates in or out of the jail. Do not contact their attorneys for them. Do not offer advice except in regard to spiritual matters.
10. In like manner, do not give out any personal information regarding you or your family.
11. Use good judgment — after all, “cons” can lie. Keep all information you learn from them confidential.
12. Grade lessons in a timely manner. Two or three weeks is a long time when you are waiting for your lessons to be returned. Encourage graders to answer questions and write short encouraging notes. These notes are vital for a positive impact.
13. As your ministry grows, consider personnel you may need: director; assistant director to attend to details; qualified volunteers to visit facilities; record-keeping volunteers; mail processing volunteers; data entry volunteers; graders for lessons. Maintain accurate records on the computer and keep track of their lesson answers.



For further tips, contact Vara at P.O. Box 1639, Georgetown TX 78627.



CONVENIENT CONVERSION? from page 5

life for the worse. He had to spend 23 hours every day in his cell because this gang was so disruptive.

From his solitary confinement, David could see a volunteer — a chaplain from the church of Christ — visiting another gang member. In time David had many studies with this evangelist and took World Bible School courses from Doris of Lewisburg, Tenn. David knew, however, that if he became a Christian, the Mexican Mafia would kill him. After much prayer, David made the commitment to be baptized into Christ and His new way of life.

The Mafia immediately issued a contract on his life. Fear, however, failed to dampen the sheer happiness of being a “new creature”. Since then, David has been moved to a better prison where he can go to worship on Sundays. Doris got him a typewriter and authorities allow him to write articles which have been published in the *Gospel Advocate* and *The Voice of Truth*. David said, “God spared my life and I will serve Him whether in prison or out, the rest of my life.” David’s conversion and commitment have been genuine and far from convenient!



In Honor of.....

- Mr. & Mrs. Robert Adams**
Meredith Javier
- Charles Annett’s friendship**
Billie J. Morgan
- Jerry & Teresa Brooks**
Doug & Nan Smith
- Mr. & Mrs. Wendell Broom, with love & admiration**
LaVonne B. Scott
- Carolyn Burks’s birthday**
Juanita Burks
- Steve & Traci Chappell’s anniversary**
Terry & Betty Chappell
- Clara Choate**
Gladys West
- Donna Compton’s service to World Bible School**
Wayne & Glenda Bounds
- Mr. & Mrs. Charles Cromwell’s anniversary**
Jean W. Horn
- Elza Dahl’s friendship**
Margaret M. Orf
- Lonnie & Margaret Dakin’s friendship**
Joseph Clay
- Mr. & Mrs. Ervin Davis**
Ann Davis
- Mr. & Mrs. Jim Delano’s anniversary**
Virgil & Mertice Miles
- Miss Abigail Elkin’s 17th birthday**
Dr. Robert & Mrs. JoAnn Walker
- Farley Church of Christ**
George & Nancy Rudder
- Fredericka Ferrell’s friendship**
Helen R. McCann
- Jemima Funk, 1st grandchild of George & Ria Funk**
Ron & Susan Pottberg

- Jennifer Gray’s friendship**
Robert & Ruth Lawrence
- Becky Harmon’s friendship**
Luella M. Nelsen
- Meredith Javier’s friendship**
Joseph Clay
- J.T. McClung’s friendship**
Nita Nelson
- Bill & Wilma McMillan’s anniversary**
Roland & Bettie Duus
- Paul Manyok Mator’s life and goals**
Bill & Mickie Kennedy
Maurice & Mary Nell Kemper
Jerry & Teresa Brooks
Tim & Sheryl Williams
Kenny & Linda Reville
Kevin & Julie Rhodes
Calvin & Diana Morris
- Mr. & Mrs. Vic Mestan’s friendship**
Mary A. Burnham
- Lavina Neuber’s 97th birthday**
Billy & Joyce Butt
- Ron & Susan Pottberg’s dedication to the Lord’s Work**
Bill & Mickie Kennedy
- Leon Powers’ 86th birthday**
Linda J. Powers
Danny Powers
- Mildred Quinn’s friendship**
Jack & Wanda Danley
- Beth Reese**
Mr. & Mrs. Kenneth H. Rasco
- John & Beth Reese’s many years in mission fields**
Bill & Mickie Kennedy
- Marcus Reese, our missionary son’s birthday**
John & Beth Reese
- LaVonne B. Scott’s friendship**
Frances Witt



MEETING JESUS IN JAIL from page 2

I found myself blaming everyone and everything in justifying the self-pity in which I was immersed. I continually flip-flopped from anger and hatred to self-pity and tears. However, after a few days, I met Melvin Strietelmeier.... I will never forget him. This man brought me hope because he introduced me to Jesus Christ.... His devotion to Christ convinced me that there is hope in the Savior.... I tremble to think about what would have happened if there had not been a jail ministry.”

See above left for Vera’s tips on successful ministry with inmates.





Honor/Memorial Contributors List

Jeff Shelton, our dedicated youth minister

Ann L. Halford

Tammy Short, our missionary daughter's birthday

John & Beth Reese

Mr. & Mrs. Vincent Thamanavar's first baby

Marvin & Dorothy Whitledge

Shawn Austin Thompson, our first grandchild

Ron & Susan Pottberg

B.S. & May Rene Turner's 61st wedding anniversary

Viola Wood's 95th birthday

Marita & Don Barnett

World Bible School teachers at Sunset CoC, Lubbock, TX

Rusty & Sue Russwurm

In Memory of.....

Mary Lou Aeder

Akron Church of Christ

Mary Aduddell

Betty Colburn

Ruth Alexander

Jack & Wanda Danley

Sterling Blane Allen

Bob & Barbara Anderson

Monty & Lori Poppe

R.B. Anglin

Virgia L. Brooks

Mr. & Mrs. Charles Baker

Paul & Tammie Baker, Josh & Sara

Adolphus Blount

Faye B. Andrews

Dennis H. Brock

Lois H. Brock

Luke & Wilma Buckner

Leonard & Shiela Morris

Obie Burgess

Chal & Doris Burgess

Conrad Cabe

Fay Marie King

Bonnie Canby

L. Duane Canby

Chestle E. Cates

Rheba A. Cates

Randall Collins

Elaine K. Powers

Don F. Dickey

Mary A. Burnham

Joe Dodd

Mrs. Lorraine Echols

Raymond Draper

The Sam Epperson Family

Paul Dugan

Peggy Sullivan

Ida May Ellerd

Dr. George & Mrs. Hilda Carman

Jerri Carman

Ernest Emerson

Ina L. Emerson

Gladys Ericson

Virgia L. Brooks

Richard (Rick) Fletcher

Dave & Vicki Roberts

Nadine Foster

Betty Colburn

Kenneth Gregory

Jim & Helen Costello

Isabel Guerra

Lanelle Howard

Alvin T. Hamilton

Lois J. Hamilton

Charles Hardesty

Don & Helen Cavanaugh

Cynthia Wray

Jean Arnold

Marlene Fields

Lavell Finley

Phyllis Persinger

Evelyn Reinken

Doris Hardman

Wesley & Patricia Bentz

Wilma Hardy

Mr. & Mrs. Ben E. Griffith

Lillian Mai Harper

Jim & Helen Costello

Muriel Haun

Gertrude Williamson

Addie Hawkins

Ethlyn Dozier

Tommy Hayes

Anne L. Wright

Pat Howard

Lanelle Howard

Buddy Humble

Richard F. Humble

Shirley Hunter

Joe & Jane George

Edwin & Donna Campbell

Louise Jennings

Mr. & Mrs. Mike Newby

Leman Jinkerson

Peggy McCasland

Bryan & Patricia Aubel,

Max & Will

George & Hilda Carman

Jerri Carman

Patsy J. Carman

Mr. & Mrs. Charlie

Rutledge

Mr. & Mrs. Mike Lind

Kevin & Kara Vick

Barry & Karen Dix

Floyd Johnson

Highland Drive CofC

Jack Jones

Lu C. Jones

Lynne Kelso

Dolores A. Williams

Clifford Kindall

Ruth M. Kindall

Sylvia Landry, my dear friend

Kathleen T. Ward

Opal Laws' sister

Jim & Helen Costello

Mary Ledford

Joe & Jane George

Buddy Legg

Lanelle Howard

Opal Martin

Gerald & Beverly Jenkins and family

Ruby McNatt

Bert & Lois Hopper

John McNeal

Hardeman & Avis Hendon

Kay Miller

Larry & Louise Pitts

Kenneth Montgomery

Van & Doris Roberson

Mrs. Montgomery

Don & Cathy McLeod

David Oliphant

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Memorial Gifts and Honor Gifts are ideal ways to remember a loved one's legacy or special occasions. At the same time, your gift is used to "teach the Word and reach the world." Upon receipt of your gift, an appropriate letter of acknowledgement will be sent naming the honoree and you as the thoughtful donor.

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By John Reese

From Crime to Christ

Stories of America

World Bible School seems to serve as a giant radar — it sweeps around the world and highlights significant developments. We report a number of these in *Action!* Some stories, such as evangelistic breakthroughs in China and Myanmar, we know about but do not report in detail to safeguard those involved. But we can report on America, the world's fourth largest mission field in terms of population unclaimed by any part of Christendom. The WBS radar screen regularly lights up America, particularly the United States. America keeps sending tantalizing echoes of receptivity, as exciting as anything else in the world. As an example, consider WBS Internet. Which nation leads in enrollments? You guessed it — the United States, which has an enrollment three times the second leading nation, Nigeria! The United States also leads in baptism requests from those who study by Internet.

WBS radar lights up America.

What has all that to do with a title about crime? As the WBS radar renders more detail across America, it keeps lighting up other entities, including prisons, jails and halfway houses.

From 1970 to 2005, the U.S. prison population increased by 700%, and 2006 closed with a total of 1,530,000. Trends suggest an increase to 1,700,000 by 2011, a ratio of one prisoner for every 182 Americans.

These souls behind walls, bars and wire feel a strong sense of need. They are isolated from family and former friends. They have time to think and many reasons to study. They are looking for solutions. They grope for direction. They hunger for hope. As many experience, World Bible School fits their situation well. Its approach is caring and relational, and purely biblical, which leads them to meet the Jesus who said of His divine mission, "He has sent Me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners" (Luke 4:18).

This marvelous release has come to many through WBS and its partner program NewLife Behavior, which adds practical insights and life-

skills. With conversions totaling thousands, the stories are too many to tell. But we can offer a few reports here to let you glimpse what so emphatically registers on our radar.

Radar, of course, is not just for watching. Its signals galvanize us and drive us to action stations. We are busy in 2007 and 2008 sharpening WBS tools to reach Americans more effectively. Our technical crews are working overtime on making Internet lessons more interactive. The Introduction Lesson, now called *The Way*, has already been upgraded, and we plan improvements for *This is Good News*. With the Lord's blessing and your support, these improvements will be in place for a full focus on America in 2009. But for now, thrill to God's mighty deeds in transforming convicts, hardened criminals and hopeless victims. Rejoice in the journey from crime to Christ!



Alcatraz Prison



Share the Season's Joy



Our WBS staff made gifts for Nicaraguan kids, including some devastated by Hurricane Felix.

We sent the boxes via *Smiles*, a project of Misión Para Cristo led by Benny Baker.

We also wish all of you a wonderful season of joy!



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